



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument

301 River Road
Harrison, NE 69346
308-436-9760 or 308-668-2211 phone

www.nps.gov/agfo

Agate Fossil Beds News Release

Release Date: September 11, 2014

For Immediate Release: A Media Advisory concerning this burn will be released prior to ignition.

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Agate Fossil Beds National Monument Prepares for Prescribed Fire

Harrison, NE – Preparations are nearly complete for a prescribed fire of up to 675 acres at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, 22 miles south of Harrison, Nebraska on Monday, September 15 and Tuesday, September 16. The burn area is located on the north and south sides of the Niobrara River in the middle of the monument south of River Road.

Monument superintendent James Hill said “This fire will offer the National Park Service a chance to reduce fuel loading in the middle portion of the monument, allowing us to better protect and manage our prairie environment.”

The project area is open grass prairie in broken terrain along the Niobrara River and south of River Road. Ignition will take place through the utilization of ground resources, and the primary carrier of fire will be grass.

Assisting with the burn will be crews from the Northern Great Plains Fire Management Area and crews from the Harrison Volunteer Fire Department. Both engines and hand crews will be involved to ensure as little disturbance as possible to the natural resources of the monument.

The burn is scheduled for Monday, September 15 or Tuesday, September 16, with prep work occurring Sunday, September 14. During the actual burn smoke from the fire may be heavy at times along River Road and visible from the surrounding region. River Road may be temporarily closed for safety reasons. Unless there is significant precipitation, smoke might be seen in the area for up to 10 days. Area residents and visitors are encouraged to listen to 97.5 and 105.9 FM Double Q Country, 610 AM KCSR, visit the Agate Fossil Beds Facebook page, or call the park at 308-668-2211 or 308-436-9760 for accurate information.

This fire represents a continuation of the monument's successful prescribed fire program which began in 2009. Segments of the monument are burned periodically, under controlled conditions, to simulate natural fires. Prescribed fire removes the build-up of dead fuels which reduces the chance of a catastrophic wildfire, and rejuvenates the native prairie grasses.

Prescribed fires are carefully conducted under identified and approved prescription conditions. Factors such as humidity, fuel moisture, wind speed and direction, and short and long-range

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weather patterns are all considered in establishing the acceptable conditions for conducting a prescribed fire. If the prescribed set of conditions does not exist on a specific day, the planned fire is postponed.



Photo Caption: Agate Fossil Beds National Monument plans a 670 prescribed burn this fall. (NPS Photo)

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